



The University of the State of New York The State Education Department



School Name: McCarthy Program at Beard	School Number:
School leader: Maria Cimino	District: Syracuse City School District
Date of Review: April 14-15, 2014	Lead Reviewer: Casey Paulus, Anthony Tolbert

School Information Sheet											
Grade Configuration		Total Enrollment	%	Title 1 Population	%	Attendance Rate	%				
Free Lunch	%	Reduced Lunch	%	Student Sustainability	%	Limited English Proficient	%	Students with Disabilities	%		
Types and Number of English Language Learner Classes											
#Transitional Bilingual		#Dual Language		#Self-Contained English as a Second Language							
Types and Number of Special Education Classes											
#Special Classes		#Consultant Teaching		#Integrated Collaborative Teaching							
# Resource Room											
Types and Number Special Classes											
#Visual Arts		#Music		#Drama		# Foreign Language		# Dance		CTE	#
Racial/Ethnic Origin											
American Indian or Alaska Native	%	Black or African American	%	Hispanic or Latino	%	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	%	White	%	Multi-racial	%
Personnel											
Years Principal Assigned to School		# of Assistant Principals		# of Deans		# of Counselors / Social Workers					
% of Teachers with No Valid Teaching Certificate		% Teaching Out of Certification		% Teaching with Fewer Than 3 Yrs. of Exp.		Average Teacher Absences					
Overall State Accountability Status (Mark applicable box with an X)											
School in Good Standing		Priority School		Focus District		Focus School Identified by a Focus District		SIG Recipient			
ELA Performance at levels 3 & 4		Mathematics Performance at levels 3 & 4		Science Performance at levels 3 & 4		4 Year Graduation Rate (HS Only)					
Credit Accumulation (High School Only)											
% of 1 st yr. students who earned 10+ credits		% of 2 nd yr. students who earned 10+ credits		% of 3 rd yr. students who earned 10+ credits		6 Year Graduation Rate					
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA											
	American Indian or Alaska Native					Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino					Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White					Multi-racial					
	Students with Disabilities					Limited English Proficient					
	Economically Disadvantaged										
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics											
	American Indian or Alaska Native					Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino					Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White					Multi-racial					
	Students with Disabilities					Limited English Proficient					
	Economically Disadvantaged										
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Science											
	American Indian or Alaska Native					Black or African American					
	Hispanic or Latino					Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander					
	White					Multi-racial					
	Students with Disabilities					Limited English Proficient					
	Economically Disadvantaged										
Did Not Meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Effective Annual Measurable Achievement Objective											
	Limited English Proficiency										
Describe the school's top priorities (no more than 5) based on the school's comprehensive plans (SCEP, SIG, DIP, etc.):											

School: McCarthy Program at Beard		School leader: Maria Cimino			
Date of Review: 04/14/14-04/15/14		School Number:		District: Syracuse City School District	
Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
2.2	Leaders ensure an articulated vision, understood and shared across the community, with a shared sense of urgency about achieving school-wide goals aligned with the vision as outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).			X	
2.3	Leaders make strategic decisions to organize resources concerning human, programmatic and fiscal capital so that school improvement and student goals are achieved.		X		
2.4	The school leader has a fully functional system in place to conduct targeted and frequent observations; track progress of teacher practices based on student data, feedback and professional development opportunities; and hold administrators and staff accountable for continuous improvement.			X	
2.5	Leaders effectively use evidence-based systems to examine and improve individual and school-wide practices in the critical areas (student achievement, curriculum & teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health) that make progress toward mission-critical goals.			X	
Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curricula and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student learning outcomes.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
3.2	The school leader and staff support and facilitate the quality implementation of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in Pre K-12.			X	
3.3	Teachers ensure that unit and lesson plans that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS coherent curriculum introduce complex materials that stimulate higher-order thinking and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.			X	
3.4	The school leader and teachers ensure that teacher collaboration within and across grades and subjects exists to enable students to have access to a robust curriculum that incorporates the arts, technology and other enrichment opportunities.			X	
3.5	The school leader and teachers develop a data-driven culture based on student needs, assessments and analysis, which leads to strategic action-planning that informs instruction and results in greater student achievement outcomes.			X	
Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students and pertinent subgroups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.					
#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
4.2	Teachers use instructional practices and strategies organized around annual, unit and daily lesson plans to meet established student goals and promote high levels of student engagement and inquiry.			X	
4.3	Teachers provide coherent, appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students to achieve targeted goals.			X	
4.4	Teachers create a safe environment that is responsive to students' varied experiences, tailored to the strengths and needs of all students, and leads to high levels of student engagement and inquiry.		X		
4.5	Teachers use a variety of data sources including screening, interim measures and progress monitoring to inform lesson planning, develop explicit teacher plans and foster student participation in their own learning process.			X	

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health: The school community identifies, promotes, and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
5.2	The school cultivates the development of overarching systems and partnerships that support and sustain social and emotional developmental health.			X	
5.3	The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is connected to learning experiences and results in building a safer and healthier environment for families, teachers and students.		X		
5.4	All school constituents are able to articulate how the school community is safe, conducive to learning and fosters a sense of ownership that leads to greater student outcomes.			X	
5.5	The school leader and student support staff work together to develop teachers' ability to use data to respond to students' social and emotional developmental health needs, so students can become academically and socially successful.			X	

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being.

#	Statement of Practice	H	E	D	I
6.2	The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.			X	
6.3	The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that students' strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.		X		
6.4	The entire school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide professional development across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.			X	
6.5	The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.			X	

School Review Narrative:

Tenet 2 - School Leader Practices and Decisions: Visionary leaders create a school community and culture that lead to success, well-being and high academic outcomes for all students via systems of continuous and sustainable school improvement.	Tenet Rating	D
<p>Debriefing Statement:</p> <p>The school leader has begun to put systems and structures in place to address the raised academic and behavioral expectations of students. While a vision has been established, is posted, and is known by some stakeholders, there are no identifiable SMART goals for the program. The school leader has made decisions around staffing assignments based on data, although feedback to teachers is inconsistent and undocumented. Furthermore, systems, structures and protocols, especially around student academic progress, are in the nascent stages of development. As a result, an interconnected system aimed at supporting students to be college and career-ready is not in place.</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>2.3: Leaders make strategic decisions to organize programmatic, human, and fiscal capital resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programmatic, fiscal, and human capital is leveraged within the limits of the program to support the needs of the community. As indicated by the reviewed master schedule, students are grouped into classrooms according to grade level bands. In an interview, the school leader stated that she uses all personnel in any possible way to cover the needs of the program; she mentioned that she moves personnel around if they are unable to work well with other colleagues in the classroom or don't feel that they have the skills necessary to address certain students' needs. The school leader also said that she continuously communicates the need for an academic coach to the district office; in the absence of a coach, the SLT, according to the school leader, works together to identify areas and skills where teachers need support, and they develop professional development opportunities to address these deficit areas. In addition, the school leader noted that she regularly communicates material needs to the district office, including technology needs and curriculum supplements; email documentation of these requests was available in the provided documents. As a result, most available resources are being used to address the immediate needs of the program as best as possible. <p>Areas for Improvement:</p> <p>2.2: The school leader ensures that the school community shares the Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Results-oriented, and Timely (SMART) goals/mission and long- term vision inclusive of core values that address the priorities outlined in the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The program's vision and mission, which were revised by the SLT in 2008, aren't uniformly recognized and understood by stakeholders. In an interview, the school leader stated that, "the mission is to help [students] get lifelong skills in order to get back to a typical school, to help them therapeutically as much as possible, and to go through our level system; that's the biggest piece - to transition them back." The school leader said that the mission of the program revolves around a level system, from one to five, that students move through as their academic and behavioral goals are met. While neither parents nor student support staff was able to clearly articulate a specific vision/mission that matched the actual vision/mission, both groups stated that, in general, the program's mission was to provide students with the services they need to be successful and get them back to their general education school. Furthermore, while most stakeholders could summarize the general vision/mission of the program, they were unable to articulate any specific SMART goals that exist to achieve the vision/mission of the program or how progress towards achievement of the vision/mission were evaluated or measured. As a result, not all stakeholders are able to work strategically to achieve goals that accomplish the program's vision and goals for student success.		

2.4: The school leader has a fully functional system in place aligned to the district's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) to conduct targeted and frequent observation and track progress of teacher practices based on student data and feedback.

- A plan for completing the district's formal APPR process is in place, but informal observations and feedback loops happen in the absence of a plan. In an interview, the school leader indicated that as the only administrator for the program, she completes all of the formal evaluations for APPR according to a schedule, all of which will be completed in May 2014. However, she noted that she has not created a written plan for conducting informal walkthroughs or providing feedback aligned to the district's instructional framework. The school leader commented that since the building has so few classrooms, she's able to get into every classroom multiple times a week and remembers her rotation in her head; additionally, feedback from informal observations is discussed in one-on-one conversations between the teacher and school leader. Although, the school leader mentioned that feedback is not documented for view collectively or over time. In the vertical team meeting, teachers indicated that the feedback they receive is helpful, while the support staff indicated that they don't receive feedback on their practice because they are considered professionals and trusted to do their work with competence. Finally, the school leader indicated that the SLT team meets to determine what professional development may be needed for teachers, based upon the school leader's informal observations and teachers' request for support. As a result, teachers do not receive regular, targeted, or evolving feedback that results in improving teacher practice along dimensions that will increase students' readiness for college and career success.

2.5: Leaders effectively use evidence- based systems and structures to examine and improve critical individual and school-wide practices as defined in the SCEP (student achievement, curriculum and teacher practices; leadership development; community/family engagement; and student social and emotional developmental health).

- Limited evidence-based systems and structures are in use at the program to track and improve progress towards the school's vision/mission. In an interview, the school leader stated that the primary system used at the program is the Daily Performance Reports, which document students' progress across 10 periods of the day, tracking their performance in life skills and IEP goals for each individual. According to the school leader, reports are sent home daily for parents to sign. At the end of each month, the school leader mentioned that teachers review reports and generate graphs, showing all data; these graphs are shared with parents in "BEST meetings" and used by teachers/staff to make changes in instruction/interventions. Data from these reports are also used to determine which students may earn field trips or incentive opportunities during the school day. While all stakeholders were able to speak to the use of the Daily Performance Reports, evidence of how this data is used to make changes in students' services, instruction, or level placement was not further explained by stakeholders or observable in documents reviewed. As a result, all stakeholders are not able to articulate its specific progress towards the program's whole vision/mission or identify causal relationships in various data sets.

Tenet 3 - Curriculum Development and Support: The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all students and are modified for identified subgroups in order to maximize teacher instructional practices and student-learning outcomes.

Tenet
Rating

D

Debriefing Statement:

The program is working toward full implementation of the Board of Education-adopted ELA and math curricula and modules, which are reportedly aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The program exhibits a wide variation in the collection and use of academic data based on formative and

summative assessments. Evidence of consistent lesson planning practices and purposeful use of common planning times was limited. Professional development and access to the expectations for Common Core implementation is inconsistent. As a result, there is limited differentiation and uneven access for all students.

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement:

3.2: The school leader ensures and supports the quality implementation of a systematic plan of rigorous and coherent curricula appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that is monitored and adapted to meet the needs of students.

- Teachers receive some support for the implementation of the CCLS in the absence of a true plan, and it is, therefore, erratic. The school leader indicated that the program has a PD schedule through February and teachers have daily collaboration time built into their schedule (1:30-2:30PM). In an interview, the school leader stated that they have no instructional coach, and support with CCLS implementation has been extremely difficult. She shared that some teachers attend Saturday Academies, and she asks those teachers to return to McCarthy and “turn key” the information. In the vertical team meeting, teachers indicated that despite time built into their schedules to plan together each day, meetings are usually “on the fly” and that the lack of an instructional coach has made it difficult to obtain CCLS materials and strategies. Teachers indicated that additional professional development around CCLS is greatly needed. Additionally, the school leader stated that all teachers are using the district’s model curricula, inclusive of the CCLS. She stated that the team spends a large amount of time trying to adapt the content and pacing of that curricula to the unique needs of the students at McCarthy; most teachers do not follow the district’s pacing guide and overall implementation varies by teacher. As a result, while the district’s curriculum is being used as the foundation of instruction, implementation has not yet been met with fidelity, greatly limiting students’ readiness for college and career.

3.3: Teachers develop and ensure that unit and lesson plans used include data-driven instruction (DDI) protocols that are appropriately aligned to the CCLS and NYS content standards and address student achievement needs.

- The use of CCLS-aligned plans, CCLS-aligned instructional strategies, and lesson scaffolding to meet students’ needs is inconsistent across grade levels and content areas. In classroom observations, few lesson plans were available for review. Of those lesson plans available for review, few reflected CCLS-based instruction. In an interview, the school leader noted that they are working towards implementing the instructional shifts in ELA and math. Additionally, while two observed classrooms had students working in leveled small groups, lesson plans indicated all students completing the same assignments and receiving the same instruction as all other peers in the classroom (aside from high school classrooms where students were using APEX, which adapts to students’ individual learning levels). As a result, students are receiving varying levels of individualized instruction aligned to the rigor required by the CCLS and instructional shifts.

3.4: The school leader and teachers have developed a comprehensive plan for teachers to partner within and across all grades and subjects to create interdisciplinary curricula targeting the arts, technology, and other enrichment opportunities.

- Few structures are in place to address interdisciplinary planning. In an interview, the school leader noted that as an extension of ELA, all students in grades K-8 address science and social studies through the “writing block” each day. While there is designated time each day (1:30-2:30 PM) for vertical team meetings and planning, the school leader indicated that special area teachers leave each day at 10:30AM. Finally, while classrooms are inclusive and teachers must plan for all subjects, reviewed lesson plans did include content from one discipline in a lesson

or distinct part of a lesson. As a result, students have limited opportunities to engage in cross-curricular thinking and skill application.

3.5: Teachers implement a comprehensive system for using formative and summative assessments for strategic short and long-range curriculum planning that involves student reflection, tracking of, and ownership of learning.

- Implementation of formative and assessment practices are inconsistent across the K-12 program. In an interview, the school leader stated that teachers “should be using formative and summative assessments; sometimes it’s not in the plans but it’s used. Some teachers use data in their planning. Some support was given last year in regard to formative assessment to drive instruction for the next day.” In the vertical team meeting, one teacher commented that she looks at data to see what she is and is not doing well and said, “I don’t look at it as often as I should.” In the vertical teacher team meeting, teachers stated that they use “assessments from Curriculum Central, DIBELS, and Wade for Wilson Reading System.” The high school teacher explained that she uses the assessments that come with the APEX system. In a classroom observation, the teacher commented directly to a student regarding their progress since the beginning of the year in counting from one to thirty by threes. This teacher also mentioned going through assessments to determine specific questions where students struggle to revisit in future instruction; the teacher commented that she has not shared this practice out with other teachers in the program at this point. In an interview, the school leader also commented that they are instituting a “reflection piece” for students to complete after they finish an assessment; it is a 1, 2, 3, 4 rating sheet to self-assess performance with a task. In terms of feedback, according to information from supplied documents and a conversation with a teacher, high school students receive the results of their tests and quizzes from APEX; they can reset their assessments and retake them up to four times for a quiz and one time for a test. Observations of hallways and classrooms showed student work with stickers, stars, and “great job” written as the feedback to students. As a result, students do not receive materials and learning experiences tailored to their unique performance levels, and feedback is not consistently specific enough to move students’ understanding of academic content.

Tenet 4 - Teacher Practices and Decisions: Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students and pertinent sub-groups experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Tenet
Rating

D

Debriefing Statement:

There are structures in place for teachers and staff to engage in planning and implementing best practices, and professional development opportunities are available for teachers. Additionally, the program is developing practices to collect and use data to inform daily instructional activities. Furthermore, critical thinking questions are inconsistently posed, and collaborative opportunities have resulted in varying rates of success. As a result, teachers continue to learn how to implement best practices aligned to CCLS and its shifts.

Strengths:

4.4: Teachers and students work together to implement a program/plan to create a learning environment that is responsive to students’ varied experiences and tailored to the strengths and needs of all students.

- McCarthy implements a program-wide plan to teach specific lifeskills that also set a framework for acceptable behaviors in the leaning environment. In an interview, the school leader stated that all teachers are expected to use “Tools for Citizenship & Life: Using the ‘ITI Lifelong Guidelines & Lifeskills in Your Classroom’” as the program-wide approach to teaching acceptable behaviors. The school leader noted that she gave teachers an overview of the curriculum over several days in September, and all teachers have copies of the curriculum.

These life skills, according to the school leader, are woven into the core curriculum and connections are made to field trips. In addition, the school leader and teachers in the vertical teacher meeting indicated that new students are exposed to this program during the intake meeting and explicitly taught acceptable behaviors in the classroom; parents are also given books that help to reinforce life skills at home. Students' progress with life skills are tracked on the Daily Performance Report, which is reviewed in CST and BEST meetings with staff and families. These reports determine which level within the program's five-level system a student falls. In the student interview, students were able to indicate what level they were currently on, although, they did not know why they were on a given level or how to move to the next level. The school leader commented that when a new student comes to McCarthy, an intake meeting takes place and then she will share that student's information and specific needs with the staff during a faculty meeting. From there, various supports are put into place to address students' needs, though parents noted that students with the most severe needs are mostly attended to and the school leader noted that much support given is reactionary. In a classroom observation, students were observed using the APEX system on the computer, and the teacher explained that the students can "work at their own pace, retake quizzes and tests, and get credit for the classes they need." Additionally, an observed teacher had three students reading in his classroom, while another student wrote at his level on the computer, and another student was using the swing in another room to help keep him calm and centered (according to a teacher). However, while the Daily Performance Reports are meant to track and reward students' individual progress, a student noted that if they earn incentive PE time and one student acts up, no one in the class is permitted to go. Finally, the school leader and two teachers noted that they have gotten outside help from the district's Autism Specialist, who comes once per week to help plan for specific students. As a result, students understand acceptable norms of behavior but may not receive supports specific to their learning or behavioral needs.

Areas for Improvement:

4.2: School and teacher leaders ensure that instructional practices and strategies are organized around annual, unit, and daily lesson plans that address all student goals and needs.

- Teachers are beginning to align instruction to data that speaks to students' individual learning needs. In an interview, the school leader commented that some teachers "do work to align instruction to data" but could not indicate any specific processes or protocols used for this purpose. The school leader and teachers indicated that without an instructional coach it is hard to assist with aligning instruction to data, however, some teachers do go through assessments to see where students are struggling. In most observed classrooms, instruction was whole group and students were completing the same tasks as their peers. In the parent focus group, one parent commented that teachers have to teach to the most severe learning disabilities in the class and some students could do much more than they are being asked to do but don't have that opportunity; this is due to the fact that students with varying disability levels are put in the same classrooms. While reviewed lesson plans included areas for the objective related to the standard, modifications, and an area for essential questions, most lesson plans were general (for the whole class of students) and did not include differentiation or specific IEP goals or modifications for students in the classroom. The school leader did indicate, however, that students' individual goals for life skills and academic IEP goals are listed on their Daily Performance Reports, which are reviewed every month in CST and BEST meetings. As a result, all students may not be able to access instruction because it is not consistently and accurately tailored to their individual needs.

4.3: Teachers provide coherent, and appropriately aligned Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)-based instruction that leads to multiple points of access for all students.

- Teachers are inconsistently implementing instruction aligned to the CCLS and its shifts. In

classroom observations, half of the lesson plans reviewed addressed CCLS related instruction. During observations, some students were made to provide evidence for their responses to peers and/or or required higher orders of thinking (for example: “What was the motivation of both characters? What was the differences between them?” and “Having computer knowledge, what kind if jobs would be a good fit for you and why?”), there were no such questions posed in other classrooms, all questions in these classrooms were lower level (for example: “Who is Robert?” “What does Robert want?”). As a result, all students are not grappling with complex texts and tasks to a degree that will prepare them for college and career.

4.5: Teachers inform planning and foster student participation in their own learning process by using a variety of summative and formative data sources (e.g., screening, interim measures, and progress monitoring).

- Teachers across the program inconsistently use data to align their instruction, and feedback provided to students is seldom specific and purposeful. In an interview, the school leader commented that some teachers “do work to align instruction to data” but could not indicate any specific processes or protocols used for this purpose. Most classrooms observed were instructing to the whole group, with the exception of some classrooms, where students were working in certain groups/centers or on computers. In observed classrooms where whole group instruction was taking place, all students were completing the same work as peers in the same room. Reviewed lesson plans reflected the same teaching strategies and assignments for all students. In terms of feedback, in an interview, the school leader noted that the quality of feedback varies greatly from teacher to teacher. She also indicated that work is consistently graded and reported out but that individual communications with students about their academic performance does not necessarily occur. In the observed vertical team meeting, teachers discussed a variety of behavior-based feedback being given to students. Likewise, students commented that most of the feedback they receive from their teachers is about their behavior. Parents in the parent focus group also indicated that the majority of communication about their child’s progress is in regards to behavior. Observations of hallways and classrooms showed student work with stickers, stars, and “great job” written as feedback. As a result, all students do not receive instruction targeted to their learning needs or feedback aligned to academic improvement that will ensure their transition back to the traditional classroom or readiness for college and career.

Tenet 5 - Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health:
The school community identifies, promotes and supports social and emotional development by designing systems and experiences that lead to healthy relationships and a safe, respectful environment that is conducive to learning for all constituents.

Tenet
Rating

D

Debriefing Statement:

The program is focused on supporting K-12 students with their social and emotional developmental health skills. The system includes an intake, and it requires staff to identify student strengths and needs. While limited documentation of processes for supporting students’ social and emotional developmental health were observed, the program employs intentional outreach to families as a critical component of supporting students and ensuring IEP goals are being met. The program is developing layers of support for students to meet their social and emotional needs so that students are able to learn in a safe and healthy environment.

Strengths:

5.3: The school articulates and systematically promotes a vision for social and emotional developmental health that is aligned to a curriculum or program that provides learning experiences and a safe and healthy school environment for families, teachers, and students.

- The program uses a curriculum to support and promote the teaching of student social and

emotional developmental health. In an interview, the school leader stated that all teachers are expected to use “Tools for Citizenship & Life: Using the ‘ITI Lifelong Guidelines & Lifeskills in Your Classroom’” as the program-wide approach to teaching acceptable behaviors. The school leader noted that she gave teachers an overview of the curriculum over several days in September and that all teachers have copies of the curriculum. According to the school leader, life skills are taught explicitly each morning in the classroom and woven into the core curriculum and connected to field trips. In addition, the school leader and teachers in the vertical teacher meeting indicated new students are exposed to the program during the intake meeting, and they are explicitly taught acceptable behaviors in the classroom; parents are also given books that help to reinforce life skills at home. According to the school leader, students’ progress with the program’s life skills are tracked on the Daily Performance Report, which is reviewed in CST and BEST meetings with staff and families; these reports determine which level within the program’s five-level system a student falls. In the parent interview, parents were articulated that the Daily Performance Reports told them their child’s progress with their life skills and academic goals. The school leader indicated that, at times, parents may be invited to therapy sessions with students to learn techniques to implement at home, which are specific to their student’s treatment. Additionally, a list of PD opportunities for the staff was reviewed, which indicated that crisis prevention and physical intervention training was provided to all staff in September 2013. However, the support staff could not recall any specific trainings or professional development they’d received, and teachers indicated that they needed more support in this area. As a result, students are able to learn in an environment responsive to safety and students’ social/emotional health needs.

Areas for Improvement:

5.2: The school leader establishes overarching systems and understandings of how to support and sustain student social and emotional developmental health and academic success.

- While general processes are in place for every student to be known by an adult, the program uses social emotional data in a manner that cannot show student or school progress over time. In an interview, the school leader noted that every student assigned to McCarthy has an intake meeting within the first few weeks of the school year. The school leader said that, during this meeting, the team and family reviews the school’s level system and identifies acceptable behaviors as well as outlines the students’ individual needs and goals. Additionally, support staff noted that every student in the program meets with a counselor for 30 minutes weekly, though no documentation of this process or records of purpose/connectedness to other program processes was observed. Additionally, while no formal referral system was mentioned, the support staff noted that teachers could send students to their office if they were having a hard time and needed to talk to someone. Furthermore, the school leader stated that students’ individual goals related to life skills and IEP goals are listed on their Daily Performance Report, which is completed daily by a teacher and sent home to the family. Teachers in the vertical team meeting stated that they “collect students points daily and graph the results monthly to look for trends in behavior.” The school leader indicated that these daily reports and graphs drive conversations during CST and BEST meetings and help to determine how students move through the levels system at the program, though no formal documentation of these processes were available for review. As a result, all students’ needs in relation to social and emotional and developmental health and academic success are not addressed consistently over time.

5.4: All school stakeholders work together to develop a common understanding of the importance of their contributions in creating a school community that is safe, conducive to learning, and fostering of a sense of ownership for providing social and emotional developmental health supports tied to the school’s vision.

- While the program has few documented processes or protocols to provide social and emotional developmental health supports, general systems are in various stages of

implementation. In an interview, the school leader noted that due to the sometimes chaotic and changing climate of the school’s daily schedule/events, there are no scheduled meetings, they just meet “whenever it’s needed...more like crisis mode.” The exception to this is CST meetings, which are held weekly or any time they’re requested, as well as BEST meetings which are held every 45-50 days. However, no documentation was available to support this process. The school leader indicated that sometimes family members are invited to these meetings to hear about students’ progress or learn ways to implement supports at home. In an interview, the support staff indicated that every student in the program meets with a counselor for 30 minutes weekly, though no documentation of this process or records of the purpose/connectedness to other school processes was observed. They also noted that they “pop their heads into classrooms in the morning to see if any of the teachers need them to talk to students before the day gets underway.” In interviews, parents and students reported feeling mostly safe and supported at the McCarthy program. As a result, staff respond to needs as they arise but don’t work in synergy to execute a common plan for the social emotional developmental health of the child.

5.5: The school leader and student support staff work together with teachers to establish structures to support the use of data to respond to student social and emotional developmental health needs.

- The programs’ systems are not fully formed or consistently implemented to respond to student data in an efficient manner. In an interview, the school leader noted that all support staff go into classrooms “when they’re needed” to support teachers or specific students who are struggling; a support staff member commented that there is no formal process for teachers to request support, however. Teachers in the vertical teacher meeting, parents in the focus group, and students in the student interview all referred to the Daily Performance Reports, which document students’ progress against their lifeskills and IEP goals. Teachers reported that that they “keep track of points daily and make monthly graphs to look for trends with students and identify when they are ready to transition back to their regular schools,” however no specific details were shared about how this data is used to make adjustments to students’ services. As with other processes in use at the school, documentation of this process beyond a description of the levels system was not observed in classrooms, hallways, or in any supplied documents. As a result, the program may not be effectively responding to all students’ social and emotional developmental needs.

Tenet 6 - Family and Community Engagement: The school creates a culture of partnership where families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well being.

Tenet Rating

D

Debriefing Statement:

The program works to keep ongoing communication with families a priority through a variety of media. Although there is frequent communication between home and program, most communication is not targeted at student academic achievement and there aren’t a variety of opportunities for families to gain a better understanding of academic data. The program is beginning to offer opportunities for families to collaborate with school personnel in order to learn ways of implementing school-based interventions at home. Additionally, the program connects families with community partners when requested, and is working to provide families with student data in an easy to understand format. As a result, families feel like they are welcome and have access to program personnel, but they are not well informed about how they may fully engage in supporting student learning and success towards college and career readiness.

Strengths:

6.3: The school engages in effective planning and reciprocal communication with family and community stakeholders so that student strength and needs are identified and used to augment learning.

- The program engages in multiple modes of communication to keep open lines of communication with families. Interviewed parents stated that they receive daily calls from their children’s teachers and that they have easy access to them via cell phone, school phone, email, and in person visits. They said that they also receive communication in the form of Daily Performance Reports and quarterly report cards. In an interview, the school leader noted that they try to actively “break down barriers in order to have good working relationships with families,” including going to students’ homes when necessary. She noted that they currently have three ESL students; according to the school leader, staff members on the team translate written communication in Spanish and can translate in person, if necessary. As a result, there are clear lines of communication between the school and families, encouraging an active partnership between stakeholders in the students’ experience at the program.

Areas for Improvement:

6.2: The school leader ensures that regular communication with students and families fosters their high expectations for student academic achievement.

- Regular communication from school to home is a priority for the McCarthy program, though the majority of communication centers on behavioral as opposed to academic progress. In an interview, the school leader indicated the program’s expectations are shared with new students and their families during intake meetings. This is also when Daily Performance Reports and the levels systems are shared, which outline life skills and academic expectations (meeting IEP goals) for the student while at McCarthy. She also mentioned that during BEST meetings, parents attend with the school team to review students’ cumulative Daily Performance Report data from the past 45-50 days and to also talk about opportunities for partnership with families. The school leader indicated that when parents are unable to be reached via telephone or to come to school, that school staff will conduct a home visit; home visits may continue throughout the year as needed, for positive or solutions-based outreach. The school leader noted that despite the ongoing communication with families, the majority of communication is in reaction to students’ behavior. Parents in the focus group also indicated that the majority of communication between them and the school is in regards to behavior, and that they seldom discuss academic progress. Parents also indicated that school events (talent show, field trips, awards ceremonies) are sparsely attended by parents; one parent indicated a need for more parents to be informed of how to be involved at the school. As a result, ongoing communication is not targeted at building students’ academic success and readiness for college and career.

6.4: The school community partners with families and community agencies to promote and provide training across all areas (academic and social and emotional developmental health) to support student success.

- The program makes some request-based connections to support families but lacks a comprehensive referral process to systematically address students’ academic and social and emotional and developmental health needs. In an interview, the school leader stated, “during BEST meetings we give [families] opportunities for specific trainings, only a few show interest, but they’re also involved with other services that support outside of school. We work really hard to connect families with services that may be available.” Support staff indicated that they do not have access to services such as Huntington and Brownell, which are active in other SCSD schools and would be helpful for their program’s student population. Additionally, teachers in the vertical teacher meeting noted that they make frequent calls home. Support staff indicated that if teachers need support with a student, they call someone from the office or send the student to a counselor; teachers noted that they need additional training and professional development in order to serve the diverse needs of the students in their classroom. As a result, not all program staff has been trained in effective ways to partner with families and community agencies to support student success.

6.5: The school shares data in a way that promotes dialogue among parents, students, and school community members centered on student learning and success and encourages and empowers families to understand and use data to advocate for appropriate support services for their children.

- The program collects data regarding students' performance along the program's pre-identified life skills goals as well as the students' academic IEP goals; together, this data determines their progression through the program's level system. At the end of each month, teachers review reports and generate graphs showing all data; these graphs are shared with parents in BEST meetings as well as informal communication. However, the school leader and parents also indicated that most communication and action plans for students' changing needs are put into place primarily in reaction to student behaviors. Parents also indicated that a more robust and comprehensive transition plan is needed for those students exiting the McCarthy program and returning to their general education school. As a result, families may not have a clear understanding of their child's academic progress and how to support their growth towards becoming college and career ready.

Recommendations:

Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of this tenet, the school should:

2.2: Create SMART goals that will lead to the achievement of the program's vision and mission. Share these SMART goals with all teachers, faculty, and parents. Create a set schedule to monitor the progress of each SMART goal; create specific markers or benchmarks of success and progress aligned to the mission and supporting initiatives, and identify changes that need to be made along the way to continue progression towards each of the SMART goals.

2.4: Create a written plan for consistent, actionable feedback delivery aligned with school initiatives and district rubrics. Create a system to document the informal observation and feedback process, to track feedback given to teachers over time and to use in making strategic decisions with regards to planning professional development, assigning mentoring teachers, providing additional supports, etc.

2.5: Create documented expectations around systems to collect and monitor data aligned to all SMART goals, ensure that these data analysis systems are interconnected, and be sure that all program staff and faculty understand the use of such system.

Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of this tenet, the school should:

3.2: Provide professional development on including the CCLS instructional shifts in planning and execution. Ensure the scheduled planning time (1:30-2:30PM) each day is utilized purposefully by implementing set expectations and outcomes, following a meeting protocol if necessary.

3.3: Create documented expectations for all teachers' lesson planning to include concrete instructional techniques that scaffold students' understanding aligned to the CCLS.

3.4: Create documented expectations for teachers' collaboration time in order to develop interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students consistently within the classroom. Ensure that special areas teachers are present for set collaboration time, to ensure true interdisciplinary planning.

3.5: Standardize a program-wide protocol for teachers to use to analyze formative and summative data; specify dates by which data should be collected, analyzed, and the results used to inform instructional planning.

Tenet 4: Teacher Practices & Decisions

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of this tenet, the school should:

4.2: Ensure teachers are planning for and executing instructional strategies that are tied to student data.

4.3: Provide opportunities for teachers leading different level courses to collaborate and share strategies to implement CCLS aligned practices.

4.5: Ensure teachers are using predetermined data sets to create and adjust student groupings in the classroom on a routine basis. Provide professional development on the incorporation of meaningful feedback to students based on data.

Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of this tenet, the school should:

5.2: Create a written plan for student referral and support and share written plan with all program staff; provide training to program team in utilizing the plan and enforce that the plan is executed as written. Document interactions with students (including next steps and outcomes) in a uniform system across the school (simply setting up an Excel tracker if necessary).

5.4: See recommendation for 5.2. Include standard meetings times, expectations, goals, and protocol in the written plan.

5.5: See recommendation for 5.2 and 5.4. Also, create and implement a data-tracking system that will house interconnected social-emotional data available to all school staff.

Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

In order for the school's strategy and practices to fully align with the concepts in the Effective column of this tenet, the school should:

6.2: Clearly identify academic expectations for all grade levels and subject areas; share and reinforce these academic expectations with all staff, students, and families on an ongoing basis. Have students periodically measure their current progress towards the pre-identified academic expectations. Ensure ongoing, documented dialogue with families focus on academic progress in addition to behavioral progress.

6.4: Create a documented process and opportunities for select parents to become advocates for the program community, supporting the work of staff and providing representative family input. Provide professional development opportunities to staff and families around building partnerships and fostering connections.

6.5: Share a clear analysis of data with supporting documents with families in a format that will support their understanding of the implications of the data. Revisit the format of your transition planning; review examples of other schools' transition plans and create a revised McCarthy transition plan that includes supports for transition at every Level of the McCarthy program with more robust preparation for students to exit the program. Clearly document this process and articulate it to all families and staff.